

EXHIBIT A

A More Inclusive Learning Community



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The following message from President Wendy Raymond was sent to the College community on Tuesday, April 9, 2024.

Friends,

Haverford's mission and values rest on the principle of continuous learning in an inclusive community. As you well know, engaging in dialogue is essential to building our Haverford community of learning, collaboration, and care. For the past several weeks, many people in our community have let me know that they have felt fearful, silenced, or a protective need to self-censor while trying to navigate dialogic engagement and its absence.

This letter is my invitation to you – all students, faculty, and staff – to address, together, community dynamics in which many people feel uninvited and unheard.

In this invitation, I am calling us into radical empathy and into building community. In this call, I am grounding us in the principles of the Honor Code, which guide students, alums, and the ethos of Haverford.

I make this call amidst growing concern about antisemitism on our campus. Questions have arisen in the context of a number of specific situations, including a recent student-led event about Israel and Palestine, flyers inviting the community to Chabad House that were displaced or removed, and silencing or self-censorship related to ceasefire resolutions at Student Association Plenaries. I list these three recent contexts in order to offer specificity about these concerns, and will discuss them shortly. And I will be clear: Antisemitism is unacceptable at Haverford, as is any form of bias, harassment, discrimination, or expression of hatred on the basis of a person's or a group's identity.

We need to rededicate ourselves to building community at a time when some behaviors of Haverford students and colleagues have resulted in experiences of disregard, shunning, or worse. Whether from intention or carelessness, having members of our community feeling "outside" the community stands in opposition to living our commitments to Haverford's Quaker-based values, which emanate from seeing the light in every person, and of living a life of continual learning.

A number of Jewish students told me that they did not attend Plenary three weekends ago because they did not feel they could vote honestly in that public space without feeling further disrespected for holding a minority viewpoint. This core and revered element of the Haverford experience can, by its very design, cause deep pain and alienation through the public nature of discourse and balloting. Students choosing not to attend or vote – or to vote against their conscience because they feel their true perspective will not be respected – is troubling and unacceptable.

I have worked directly with more than one set of Students' Council co-presidents who actively pursued changes to make Plenary a more inclusive space. Yet the best efforts of those student leaders and many other students have not been able to fully supplant an atmosphere that can arise from a dominant sensibility that can inhibit people from asking questions or expressing minority opinions.

Plenary is one example that frames the larger matter of how participation in the full Haverford experience has felt precarious for some in our community. Another example is that in the past two weeks, concerns of antisemitic bias flared when several community members alerted staff to the disappearance of flyers inviting us to events at Chabad House. Our investigation determined that the movement of many of the flyers can be accounted for by benign mechanisms, but we continue to investigate whether there was a targeted removal of any of these materials on the basis of their promotion of Jewish activities, which would be a clear case of antisemitism.

Our commitments to freedom of expression

Recent student-organized events on campus have renewed debate about the boundaries of expressive freedom at Haverford and at many institutions of higher learning, particularly when such expression involves claims and evidence that many regard as dubious, or when such expression has harmful impacts.

One particular student event, about public health in Palestine, was offered with a title and theme that were deeply offensive to many people. Even while we will consistently stand behind students' rights to expressive freedom on political matters, Senior Staff and I were troubled that this event's title and brief description evoked centuries-old pernicious tropes related to blood libel. We interceded in what we believed was a spirit of Haverfordian dialogue, encouraging student organizers to exercise more empathy and consideration of their fellow community members, and to alter their approach to their topic. While the organizers modified the title of their event, we were disappointed by those changes, which did not assuage important and clearly expressed concerns. I regret that our commitment to freedom of expression in this case has resulted in such pain and harm, contributing further to the feelings of alienation and prejudice that many Jewish people have described to me. My colleagues in the Dean's office continue to engage students about this event and its widespread impacts.

We are committed to expressive freedom as a core principle within our academic mission. At Haverford, when we are confronted with challenging or even objectionable speech we, like most colleges and universities, will consistently look to uphold expressive freedom. Rather than censor, we prioritize making spaces for learning, discussion, reflection, and connection, for example, by organizing events featuring knowledgeable visitors such as [Project Shema](https://www.projectshema.org/) (<https://www.projectshema.org/>), which trains and supports the Jewish community and allies to understand and address contemporary antisemitism, and the [American Friends Service Committee Update on Gaza](https://afsc.org/news/update-afsc-staff-rafah) (<https://afsc.org/news/update-afsc-staff-rafah>) with Jennifer Bing. We also advise community members about the kinds of expressions that might alienate others and invite new or different ways of being together, while fostering a community of learners and workers who can trust both our commitment to equitable access to education and our commitment to free expression for all.

The social Honor Code invites concerned students to address breaches of trust, concern, and respect within an educational and restorative framework. We also have a [Restorative Practices resource](https://www.haverford.edu/restorative-practices-haverford-college) (<https://www.haverford.edu/restorative-practices-haverford-college>) for employees and students. The learning process itself is at the core of our liberal arts enterprise: promulgated ideas, any of which may be offensive to any of us, can be questioned, challenged, defended, or refuted through rigorous argumentation, curiosity, and evidence-based debate – and not just in the classroom, but in venues of community members' own creation. And there is also the proactive self-restraint that comes from considering how our exercise of expressive freedom impacts those with whom we are in community.

The Honor Code eloquently expresses our collective aspirations:

...For our diverse community to prosper, we must embrace our differences and be mindful of our varied perspectives and backgrounds; this goal is only possible if students seek mutual understanding by means of respectful communication. The Honor Code holds us accountable for our words and actions, and guides us in resolving conflicts by engaging each other in dialogue.

Even with this grounding and the many opportunities for dialogue we opened up throughout this year, students and colleagues continue to feel isolated within our community. This reminds us why freedom of expression – which includes the ability of individuals to voice commentary, support, or criticism of governments and nation-states – comes with responsibility. We are responsible for considering how our expressions impact others. And we are responsible for expressing ourselves in ways that make room for, and ideally invite, dialogue.

An unavoidable byproduct of the right to expressive freedom is the reality that the free expressions of one person can feel uncomfortable or even threatening to another. The open exchange of ideas, in a diverse world, can lead to feelings of frustration, confusion, and offense – even among friends, and certainly among people with differing views. The easy anonymity of social media often makes matters worse, with unrestrained comments and messaging a poor substitute for the human connection that is foundational to the Haverford approach to life and learning.

Our next steps forward

As president, it is my responsibility and my commitment to guide our community toward ways of learning, working, and living together that enable us all to be the best versions of ourselves as together we advance Haverford's values-based educational mission. We begin by rejecting all forms of bias, discrimination, harassment, and hate. Further, we ground ourselves and one another in the spirit of the Honor Code by establishing "...an open environment of learning and growing through personal and community responsibility."

We are moving forward along many avenues. I am finalizing and will soon announce the composition of a newly formed [Ad Hoc committee on Freedom of Expression, Learning, and Community](https://www.haverford.edu/president/ad-hoc-committee-freedom-expression-learning-and-community) (<https://www.haverford.edu/president/ad-hoc-committee-freedom-expression-learning-and-community>) that will help us examine and refine existing policies and practices and reaffirm our longstanding institutional values. Faculty and staff colleagues continue to lead and learn, leaning into building a community characterized by responsible and learned engagement. The [dean's office](https://www.haverford.edu/student-life) (<https://www.haverford.edu/student-life>) staff continue to engage students in dialogue and reflection about the impact of their words and actions on the broader community. These conversations are grounded in Haverford's dual commitment to free expression and inclusive community, and informed by our [community guidelines](https://www.haverford.edu/student-life/community-guidelines) (<https://www.haverford.edu/student-life/community-guidelines>), including the student-governed Honor Code. If you think you may be witnessing or personally experiencing antisemitism or any form of identity-based discrimination, you can send a report via this [Incident Reporting Form](https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?HaverfordCollege) (<https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?HaverfordCollege>) for acts committed by students, or contact our [EEO officers](https://www.haverford.edu/human-resources/contact-staff#affirmative-action-equal-employment-opportunity-officers) (<https://www.haverford.edu/human-resources/contact-staff#affirmative-action-equal-employment-opportunity-officers>) for reports concerning faculty or staff. Please see the various supports offered [here](https://www.haverford.edu/president/presidential-communications/community-care-and-resources-response-israel-gaza#on-campus-support) (<https://www.haverford.edu/president/presidential-communications/community-care-and-resources-response-israel-gaza#on-campus-support>). Any student or group found responsible for intentionally or maliciously targeting others will be subject to our [student conduct resolution procedures](https://www.haverford.edu/student-life/community-guidelines/student-conduct-resolution-guidelines-and-procedures) (<https://www.haverford.edu/student-life/community-guidelines/student-conduct-resolution-guidelines-and-procedures>), which center on individual growth and community restoration.

In the spirit of continuing revelation at the heart of Haverford's educational philosophy, I thank you for your enormous investments in listening, asking questions, practicing care, concern, and inclusivity, empathizing, building bridges, moving past assumptions and suspicion, and inspiring the best in ourselves and one another.

Sincerely,

Wendy



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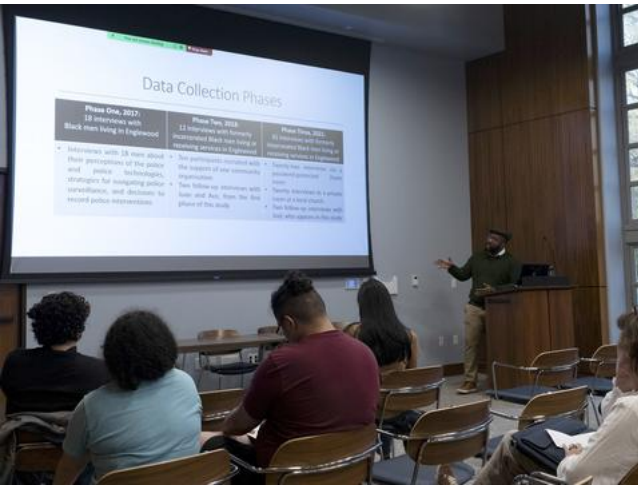
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